

fense that he may prove to himself that he can do the right thing.

Praising what children do well is usually sufficient stimulus to desirable behavior, as "Helping to roll out the rug helps us get ready for stories quicker," rather than giving the child any feeling of superiority by a personal remark, like "You were a good boy to help."

Again Froebel said, "*Children take to learning as naturally as to play.*" Their many questions show how eager they are for information: "What is the difference between dew and fog?" "How can a heavy airplane stay up in the air?" "Is a bouquet of flowers or a vase?" They acquire new words naturally when understanding is the background. When we were discussing how eggs were kept warm the words *hatchery*, *incubator*, *electricity*, and *temperature* presented no difficulty as indicated by a little girl's question, "Did the hatchery man put a thermometer under the hen to find the temperature so as to know how much electricity to turn on?"

New skills are fascinating to children. Early in the year they saw just for the fun of the activity, and much later saw for a definite purpose of construction. They have readily learned the blanket stitch so as to make the oilcloth head for their hobby horses for the May Day. Pouring water without spilling and hanging up the doll's clothes are both fascinating skills to be learned. New experiences are a rich part of the child's learning. In the midst of the making of our train one boy went to visit his grandmother in South Carolina and when he returned he suggested that we needed a dining-car on our train, "Because I went in one with my Daddy and he told me a lot about them when we went back to our coach. And when I got home I found a picture in my book that I'll bring and show you." This incident reminds me of the refrain of the folk tale (though I change the words a bit, the idea is the

same): "I saw it with my eyes; I heard it with my ears; and part of it"—I found out for myself.

And what is the result of kindergarten training? The whole child as an individual grows and develops at his own rate, he gains confidence in himself, he adapts himself to his surroundings, and he learns to live happily with others.

Was Froebel a progressive teacher in 1837?

NELLIE L. WALKER

THE HIGH SCHOOL AS A PEOPLE'S COLLEGE

PART FIVE

What Qualifications Are Needed in High School Teachers?

IN four preceding articles of this series we have considered children of high school age, purposes of secondary education, the curriculum of the schools, and the place of subject matter. The main conclusions from these four articles form the basis of some intelligent demands for types of teachers needed. The conclusions are stated again here in a form so brief that they can serve as premises for the conclusions we may reach about teachers:

1. Children themselves are so important in education that they should be provided for in terms of their adolescent needs, aside from traditional demands as to subject matter, ease of administration, or teaching convenience.

2. The genuine needs of pupils in the present and near future constitute the only defensible aims of education which teachers carry on as the agents of society and interpreters for children.

3. Pupils should learn in the schools those skills, knowledges, and appreciations which constitute growth, which are within their abilities to learn, which they can by experience comprehend, and which can be

justified as personally and socially worth the effort to attain.

4. Subject matter of any kind must justify itself in the high schools in terms of what it contributes to the growth of pupils into useful and happy adults.

Teachers are professional people who deal in human values. They are employed at public expense to serve children in a collective capacity in ways more significant than individual parents can serve in causing growth in their own children. In this sense teaching is such a privilege that no teacher need ever apologize for his work.

In the narrower school situation the teacher is one side of the eternal triangle of which the other two sides are children and subject matter. To the teacher falls the blessed ministry of directing human beings in their growth, through an intensified and purposeful program of the schools, by drawing upon all that is best in life experience and weaving it into the lives of growing children. Again the teacher occupies the enviable middle ground. To the teacher falls the work of unifying children and the subject matter of life, ever joining the present generation of children to their destiny as adults who should bring ever finer civilization.

1. What is the Teacher's Niche?

For a number of years the present writer has been attempting to clear up the thinking about the office work of teachers by stating the issues more clearly. Here we put them as questions, with reasonable answers and the statement of principle which governs:

1. *Whose school is it?* The school certainly does not belong to the teachers, despite a passing habit they use in speaking of it with the possessive "my" or "our." Teachers are employed persons who serve for a period contracted for and then are re-employed or pass on. Parents and other people in the community provide the school, with the help of the state and other outside

agencies, but it is really not their school. They rarely go to the school and have but a minor part in all that goes on there, except as the problems come to them more or less forcefully through their children. *The school really belongs to the children. All that is done at school should be determined solely upon the basis of the greatest good for the children who attend, both in the present and for every later day of their lives.* Conveniences of teachers and parents are minor matters when weighed against the needs of children in any school.

2. *Who is important at school?* Tradition and general practice give the teacher a position of exaggerated importance in the school. Witness the placing of furniture, the requirement that pupils face forward when the teacher is speaking as though the voice of the teacher were an oracle, or the holding up of hands for permission to speak. Really the school should in all respects be child-centered, a fact so well accepted in theory that the term "child-centered" has nearly become a hackneyed expression in professional writings. Teachers are important to the extent that they cause growth in children. Only to the extent that teachers lose their lives and find them again in the development of the children they teach are they of any importance. Teachers are hired persons, readily replaced by others as good. Children are the very stuff of which a next generation of citizens is formed. *Children are so important in all that takes place at school that not much else matters.*

3. *What is the important thing that happens at school?* All that teachers do, whether in planning or actively carrying on the affair of learning, is important just to the extent that lives are changed. The skills or information or ways of feeling that pupils grow into are but small parts of the larger picture for any individual child or the group taken collectively. The small parts are not important except as they fit

into the organized whole of the school's finished product—children who can carry on better than the parents who rear them or the teachers who teach them. *The growth of children into well-rounded human beings, through their own learning efforts, is the important thing at school.*

4. *What is the important work of teachers at school?* Both tradition and prevailing practice allot to the teacher the work of assigning tasks for pupils to do and the following check-up on their work in the form of recitation. A corollary of this arrangement makes the teacher an authority in settling all disputed points and at clearing up all difficulties with clear and convincing explanations. School is far from being so simple a matter as this formula supposes. Pupils need direction in study so as to form the right habits. Encouragement and the right amount of help at the critical stage are large determiners of success. Stimulation which the teacher can provide to suit the needs of different individuals weighs heavier in learning than the random and awkward efforts which pupils are likely to make under the stress of assignment-recitation learning of the conventional type. *The work of teachers is to direct learning efforts as the means by which pupils grow into finer individuals.*

II. First-Line Qualifications for Teachers

In line with the main points already set up in this series of discussions, there seems to be absolute need for teachers with certain broad qualifications in such measure that there is not any possible doubt of their presence in a single teacher. They are:

1. *Sympathetic understanding of adolescent children.* Extended study of child nature, broad experience with children, and open disposition in social situations are likely indicators of people who may qualify on this point.

2. *Broad insight into the needs of society.* These needs will be worked out in

the next generation of citizens who are now pupils in the schools. Teachers have upon them the responsibility of translating adult demands upon the schools into a training program which will be the best possible plan for growing a fresh crop of citizens from the seedlings who daily occupy the seats at school. Teachers are mediators for destiny in a democracy which pins its faith to education.

3. *Conception of learning as broad as child growth.* Included here are all the skills, knowledges and appreciations that constitute the changes which should take place as children grow at school. School subjects should be conceived as means, never ends.

4. *Mastery and understanding of the educational values of the subject matter to be taught.* Ability to plan and teach subjects so as to cause pupil growth in life understandings and attitudes, or to cause mastery of skill really valuable in living, as opposed to teaching subjects for their own sake, is the mark of real teachers.

These four demands include the whole duty and responsibility of teachers. All that can be added merely fills out the picture. We attempt to do that under three following main heads.

III. What Kinds of Teachers Do Children Want and Need?

A child is more apt to learn under a teacher he likes, of whom he is not afraid, whom he can always respect, and who maintains working standards in a busy atmosphere. From the child's own standpoint the qualities in a teacher which guarantee such a working situation are probably some such set as the following:

1. *"The milk of human kindness."* Children are human beings. They need and deserve kind treatment by their teacher-leaders. Harshness may intimidate timid souls but generally does not reach those children most in need of a teacher's influence.

2. *Can remember when she was a child.*

A teacher who has forgotten when she was a child will probably be lacking in sympathy for childish weaknesses and the childish desire for a friend in need. Teachers who can see children through themselves as children are not likely to pose, or draw apart, or dictate standards too high for children to realize.

3. *Plays honest and square with children.* Youngsters have a keen sense of fair play and are generally right in their analysis of the teacher's fairness. There is no stronger appeal to children than fair treatment.

4. *Keen sense of humor.* Children like their fun. They are to be pitied when they do not have a teacher who can laugh with them, even when the joke is on her. This is one of the acid tests by which a teacher makes herself acceptable to fun-loving children of this generation in America.

5. *Not hard to look at.* Teachers should be good looking enough for children to feel no bad effects from looking at them six hours a day. Pretty clothes help a lot, and children like color. They also like modesty and good taste. After all, the old proverb, "Pretty is as pretty does," helps out a lot!

6. *A voice that does not rasp or cut or rub.* A part of this requirement is to talk loud enough to be heard but not loud enough to beat in upon sensitive ears and sensitive souls. Exact sounding of full words and speaking toward those who are to hear are points many teachers have not mastered. Most teachers talk far too much—explain too much, give too many directions, repeat directions, just talk and talk! It would help any teacher to study an exact stenographic or dictaphone record of what is said in the schoolroom. Children need a chance to think things out. How can they if the teacher forever talks?

7. *Refrains from sarcasm, irony, a biting tongue.* The schoolroom is a poor place to be smart or witty in a personal way at

the expense of individual pupils who are sensitive and do not always see the point of the bright remarks directed their way. Worse wounds than ever appear are made in this seemingly innocent way, and the victims are made definitely antagonistic, militant, or shrinking in ways never intended or suspected. A "blessing-out" or "tongue-lashing" when the teacher "flies off the handle" may give vent to the teacher's feelings, allowing her to "blow off steam," but growth in co-operation and pupil behavior must be secured in ways more positive and constructive.

8. *Not a taskmaster, a hearer of lessons.* The teacher helps pupils find things they can and want to do, plans with them how to do, encourages them to form purposes to carry on, gives directions for operation, stands by when difficulties come, leads and guides in all that is done and learned. She causes children to feel need as well as to satisfy felt needs. Mostly her work is not to drive and make a grind of school work. The good teacher gets work done and learning accomplished at school, rather than to assign lessons at school to be learned at home and repeated at school.

9. *Firm and business-like with children.* Pupils sense indecision and uncertainty in a teacher quickly. Firmness commands respect and generally secures obedience and good attitude. When combined with kindness and fairness, firmness in a teacher is greatly admired by children.

10. *Children as more important than subjects.* Children are bewildered and resentful of subjects mechanically administered and required by a system of penalties and time deadlines. They feel and know that they are victims of education rather than partners in the enterprise. They are keenly sensitive to human values in the present tense.

Other child-made standards for teachers can be stated. These ten will serve for illustrations of the larger group. They are

probably more important than many of the matters stressed in the college training of teachers, or in the administration of schools.

IV. Teacher Personality

A lot of loose thinking has been covered up among school people for a long time by the blanket term "personality." We have even debated the issue of personality versus training for teachers, generally reduced to the older issue of whether teachers are "born" or "made." All this seems pretty futile to some of us who have heard it for a long time and whose business it is to get the finest young people interested in teaching and then help them learn how to do the work in the best way. We really can not weigh one factor against the other in a case where both are indispensable and where either would be useless without the other. Personality is the total result of a group of factors working in unison toward a desired end in a single person. The factors are personality traits, or personal qualities. A few of them can be reasonably well identified for purposes of thinking and pointed out as desirable in teachers:

1. *Love and tolerance for children.* People who do not care for children should not teach. The acid test in this respect is whether children seem to be easy and free when in one's presence, especially when there is something that calls for joint action. Condescending, patronizing, stiffish grown persons should never try to be teachers. It is hard to love some types of children, but any person capable of becoming a teacher should be able with patience and kindness to get along with most children, to like them and be liked in return.

2. *Intelligence that is above average.* It takes people of some ability to accomplish a high school and college education required of teachers. In a whole group of children some will be found who are very bright. It is little short of pathetic to see a slow-thinking, matter-of-fact type of teacher trying to handle brilliant children.

So much of good judgment, insight into human nature, straight thinking is required in teachers that only people above average in mentality should ever attempt to be teachers.

3. *Healthy and normal as to nerves.* A person who is not strong and well has no business to teach. Nervous, high-strung, easily-fatigued types can probably do fine things in other fields, but they should not teach.

4. *Willing to work long, not easily tired.* For well people fatigue is mostly a matter of congeniality and adjustment to work. Teaching is not the hardest work we know, but it does take long hours and quite a bit of endurance to carry on. Demands upon time and resources become greater upon teachers as more refinements of curriculum and teaching procedure are realized. Willingness to work is a leading quality wanted in a teacher.

5. *Give-and-take disposition of open-mindedness.* Present standards of young people call for a teacher who can "take" as well as "give." One of the worst terms of contempt among children is "sissy" and it is no longer applied to just one sex. The day is past when a teacher can stand on her dignity, though true dignity is still a very great asset. It is not a weakness for a teacher to admit she does not know, if this is not repeated often enough to become a habit; it is a very great weakness for a teacher not to know and not find out at the earliest opportunity and report her findings to the group. There are two or more sides to most questions; the teacher must see them all and use as the occasion demands.

6. *Moral and religious stability.* When a teacher gets herself talked about in a community, where a question of morals is the issue, her usefulness is largely ended. The best way to meet this standard is to live above suspicion of the most suspicious persons, who will always be the gossips. A teacher should have personal liberty, but she does not have the liberty to do what will

injure her personal work. Religious convictions and the practice of them along thoroughly tolerant lines will usually gain the respect of even religious fanatics of opposed beliefs.

7. *Able to engage in many school activities.* Schools are more than books and lessons. Better high schools foster many so-called extra-curricular activities, and the tendency is to write such bodily into the school's daily program. Such activities must be directed by teachers, else they are generally drawbacks to progress. Teachers are fortunate who can do a lot of things not in books. Really fine opportunities for character and personality building in pupils come from the school activities. All teachers must take part in them.

V. Education for Teachers

The logic of the school situation, the broad lines of the school set-up, the qualities needed by youngsters in their teachers, the personality demands upon teachers—all these aid our thinking in setting up the pattern for teacher education. The irreducible demands follow:

1. *Liberal education in all main lines.* Teachers should be really educated people. They are working all day long to cause in youngsters the same condition they themselves have already attained. "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." No less than a broad education, a good degree of scholarship, insight into education gained through getting an education, are acceptable in those who are to teach our children the way of life. Depth and soberness and humility that come with true study and thought mark the real teacher.

2. *A culture for present-day society.* Teachers are interpreters of society's ideals, builders of these ideals into young people. A teacher's life counts for more as an example than all she can say or teach. True culture is felt and lived. It is a manner, an attitude, a spiritual quality that rises above any creed or pose or pretense. Education that "clicks" in the modern scene is a

close ally, sometimes an indicator of culture. Gentleness and modesty and intellectual honesty go with true culture. Would that teachers were always walking advertisements of the products they stand for!

3. *To know children and how learning takes place.* Equal in importance with the teacher's own education and culture—indeed a part of that preparation—is understanding of children. Fortunate is the beginning teacher who has been a member of a large family of children, who has had a normal play-life as a child with many playmates, who has taught children at Sunday-School, or even has had a lot of playing at teaching school, especially if she has played at being the teacher. Psychology courses at college are good to the extent that they can be applied when working with children. The present writer has seen about as many ambitious young teachers confused by a smattering of notions gained in psychology courses as he has seen helped by such courses. It is a very difficult thing to make connections between psychology and children. Such study should emphasize principles of learning rather than structural processes, normal children rather than subnormal or abnormal, plain English ways of expressing ideas rather than a spouting of technical terminology which is not standardized and not clear even to advanced students. There is not much way to know about children and how they learn except to work with them in actual situations.

4. *To organize subject matter for children to learn.* The subject matter of the teacher's own education and the background of her own culture must be remade in terms of children as society's plan of passing on the torch of civilization. The materials of a child's learning should be a complete blending of his nature and experience with the heritage of the race. It is the blessed privilege of the teacher to act as the go-between. The preparing teacher must study and know the curriculum of the school, get its philosophy clear, become familiar with its

plans of organization, make a try-out of her own ability to organize sample materials, and prepare for the time when she will be a curriculum-maker in the schools.

5. *To learn principles of learning and teaching.* In bringing the child and subject matter together the teacher uses principles of learning. This is the whole business of teaching. Here philosophy and psychology are brought to bear upon the world's storehouses of ideas, facts, events, people, processes, and all are resolved into a working plan to fit the needs and nature of a small group of children. The interests and experiences of the child are the key to most matters of learning—really determine all such matters as attention, motivation, satisfaction or annoyance, success or failure. Principles of teaching rest upon principles of learning; they are teacher's part of the job of "keeping the ball rolling." It is highly important that such matters be not left to chance, for the young teacher to learn through trial and error, which is usually mostly error.

6. *To learn to teach by teaching, under direction.* We learn for the most part by doing. Teachers must learn their work by doing it. No matter if a person is ever so well educated and personally cultured, and even if there has been serious study of children and subject matter and principles of teaching, he has to learn many of the ins and outs of teaching in a schoolroom working with children. Those of us engaged in preparing teachers generally believe an introduction to actual teaching should be made under very careful direction of an expert teacher. The supervising teacher is responsible for both children and beginning teacher and sees that both learn together, one to teach and the others the way of life. A period of even a few months in this sort of situation may guarantee the success of a teacher for her whole life. Very few beginners fail after their period of student teaching is done successfully.

Of course, the numbered items given above as constituents of a teacher's education are not to receive the same time emphasis in the training period. In fact, the pattern being followed in most teachers' colleges at present assigns more than 80% of the four-year course for high school work to the items of liberal education and cultural subjects. We believe that a good liberal education makes the best possible basis for study of children, curriculum, principles of teaching, and the period of directed teaching. After all, teachers must be educated persons!

VI. If High Schools are to be People's Colleges

It seems we are justified in stating the following principles as a conclusion of this series of five articles:

1. Children are the first concern of teachers. They are to be treated as whole individuals whose steady growth into balanced personalities rises above all other considerations.

2. High schools demand teachers who are personally fit to lead through possession of human qualities and as a result of thorough education for the work of teaching.

3. Teachers should completely serve. They should be as devoted and consecrated to their work as ministers and physicians are to theirs and should uphold correspondingly high ethical standards.

4. The best thought of our philosophers should find place in our schools through teachers who can interpret and apply pure thought to learning situations for children.

5. The subject matter of the schools should be closer to the children. Procedures for learning should be constantly modified according to best thought and proved soundness.

6. The futility of mental discipline must be recognized and programs modified accordingly. Success in undertakings where values are understood and where a large degree of enjoyment of work enters in must

be given a place of emphasis. Then children will work harder and become better educated.

7. More attention must be given to moral and character values in the schools through an extended program of activities that involve these phases and provide for their realization.

8. The high schools must serve all children of adolescent age. Programs must be planned to include the needs of all and serve the ends of training the citizenship in a democracy.

PAUL HOUNCHELL

HOLDING THE MIRROR UP TO —VIRGINIA!

"WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH KANSAS?"

DESPITE all the furious protestations of politicians—state, county, city, and township—the Kansas school system as a whole remains undernourished in the matter of financial support. It is true that Kansas City, Kansas, is building a two and a half million dollar high school building and it is true that cities like Topeka and Wichita have high school buildings which would vie with Solomon's temple in beauty and grace. It is true that in some of the more fortunate cities of the first, second, and third class, reasonable salaries are obtained for the teachers in these systems. On the other hand, it is also true that there are hundreds of school buildings in the smaller units which are a disgrace to the community and the state, that many of these buildings are poorly equipped, and that there are hundreds, even thousands, of teachers who are working on a mere subsistence basis.

There are scores of college instructors and professors who are being paid less than is being earned by the managers of hamburger and chili stands. There are scores of junior high school principals who are receiving less compensation than the cor-

porals and the sergeants in the WPA organization. These are stark facts and can be proved without any difficulty. In education in Kansas there are no adequate provisions for teacher tenure or for teacher retirement. Our certification laws are a matter for ironic jest. Our supervision laws are a farce.

On the whole, Kansas schools are suffering from a bad case of malnutrition and rickets. This condition is true and applicable to practically every type of school in Kansas from the state educational institutions of higher learning down to the smallest rural school.

On the whole, the teaching profession in Kansas is woefully lacking in professional spirit and unity. Let a proposal for constructive legislation be suggested and immediately it is evident that most school leaders view such proposals in a provincial manner. In the main, we cannot agree upon anything. Many of us are utterly lacking in courage and in adventurous spirit. We want to play safe at all costs.

We may be very brave in making a speech before the vacuum of a Rotary club or the mausoleum of a college classroom, but when it comes to opposing a local city or county boss or going counter to the wishes of a state political leader, we prefer to go on a fishing trip. We like to think of "belling the cat," but want someone else to do the belling for fear the cat might scratch, or worse yet, devour us. These are unpleasant truths but must be faced honestly and frankly when we consider the question, "What's the matter with education in Kansas?" Many of us are quite willing that somebody else should be the lion but we, ourselves, prefer to be field mice.

—*The Kansas Teacher*

To the question: "What is meant by pasteurized milk?" a young Priest school student answered excitedly:

"After the cows have been in the pasture and eaten the grass, the milk is pasteurized."